

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5365
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 0152

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, NU
SUBJECT: RIOTING WANING AFTER CHAMORRO BURIAL

SUMMARY: THE ENORMOUS CROWDS INVOLVED IN CHAMORRO'S FUNERAL SERVICE AND SUBSEQUENT MARCH TO THE CEMETERY DID NOT TAKE TO THE STREETS IN ROGANIZED FASHION AFTER THE FUNERAL. BANDS ROAMED THE CITY AND ATTACKED VARIOUS PROMINENT TARGETS BUT WERE EFFICIENTLY CONTROLLED BY THE GN. ONE GN SECURITY OFFICIAL DIED OF GUNSHOT WOUNDS UNDER UNCLEAR CIRCUMSTANCES, A FEW ACTIVISTS WERE APPARENTLY INJURED, AND SEVERAL DEMONSTRATORS WERE DETAINED. THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE WAS WELL BELOW THAT OF THE PRECEDING EVENING. THE PERSON (S) RESPONSIBLE FOR HIRING THE ASSASSINS MAY BE NAMED TODAY. END SUMMARY

1. THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR CHAMORRO IN A LARGE MANAGUA CHURCH WAS PACKED AND THERE WERE CROWDS OUTSIDE EVEN THOUGH THE SERVICE WAS ADVANCED TO AN EARLIER TIME THAN ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED. A SMALL NUMBER
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OF POLITICAL AGITATORS TRIED TO MAKE SPEECHES AT THE END OF THE SERVICE BUT FOLLOWING THE PLEA OF CHAMORRO'S WIDO FOR DISPASSION THE MICROPHONES WERE TURNED OFF AND THE SERVICE ENDED. THE PRO-CESSION TO THE CEMETERY SWELLED TO HUGE PROPORTIONS REplete WITH POLITICAL BANNERS INCLUDING ONES OF THE FSLN. THE POLITICAL ACTIVISTS
,
ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE THE MARCHERS INTO CHANTING REVOLUTIONARY

SLOGANS HAD LIMITED SUCCESS. MANY MARCHERS WERE PERIODICALLY SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM RATHER THAN CHANTING SLOGANS. THE PROCESSION WAS VERY ORDERLY AND REMAINED SO AFTER IT REACHED THE CEMETERY WHERE THE CROWD SWELLED TO EVEN LARGER PROPORTIONS. NEW UDELA PRESIDENT, RAFAEL CORDOVA RIVAS, LAUNCHED INTO A SPEECH SAYING IN EFFECT THE END OF THE DYNASTY IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING BECAUSE SOMOZA'S SUPPORT HAS ERODED WHEN THE RADIO STATION OVER WHICH HE WAS BROADCASTING FROM THE CEMETERY WENT OFF THE AIR. THIS LED TO THE FIRST BREAKING UP OF THE CROWD. HOWEVER, BECAUSE MOST WERE NOT READY TO LEAVE, THE CROWD LEFT THE CEMETERY IN FRAGMENTARY FASHION.

2. SOME GROUPS, PRIMARILY OF YOUTH, BEGAN ATTACKS ON CERTAIN POLITICAL TARGETS SUCH AS THE SOMOZA FAMILY NEWSPAPER OFFICE NOVEDADES AND A COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE WHERE ONE OF THE REPORTED ASSASSINS WORKED AND SECOND ONE HAD EARLIER WORKED FOR A BRIEF TIME. THE POLICE RESPONSE WAS TO SURVEIL THESE GROUPS AND TO MOVE IN TO DISPERSE OR DETAIN THEM WHEN THEY STRUCK. TEAR GAS AND SHOTS INTO THE AIR WERE EMPLOYED BUT THERE WERE NO DEATHS OR INJURIES REPORTED OTHER THAN A SECURITY OFFICIAL WHO WAS SHOT DEAD AT THE CEMETERY UNDER UNCLEAR CIRCUMSTANCES. THE NOVEDADES OFFICE WAS REPORTEDLY DAMAGED BY GUNSHOTS AS WELL AS ROCKS BUT THERE WAS NO MAJOR DAMAGE. A FEW HOURS AFTER THE BURIAL THE SPECIAL RIOT POLICE SEALED OFF THE CEMETERY AND THERE WERE INCIDENTS OF ROCKS THROWN FROM WITHIN AND TEARGAS IN EXCHANGE. IN THIS EXCHANGE THERE WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN SOME INJURIES AND FURTHER DETENTIONS.

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3. BY EVENING THE CITY APPEARED CALM, AND IN MANY AREAS THERE WERE HARDLY ANY PERSONS OR VEHICLES TO BE SEEN ON THE STREETS.

4. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE WORST OF VIOLENT ACTIVITY MAY HAVE PASSED. WHETHER THIS PROVES TO BE TRUE DEPENDS IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, ON THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF DETAILS REGARDING WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASSASSINATION, WHICH REPORTEDLY WILL OCCUR THIS EVENING, WHETHER IT APPEARS JUSTICE IS BEING DONE, AND HOW THE PUBLIC REACTS TO THESE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INVESTIGATION. THERE REMAINS IN ANY CASE A WIDESPREAD PUBLIC FEELING THAT PRESIDENT SOMOZA IS GUILTY FOR THE CONDITIONS WHICH CAUSED THE ASSASSINATION EVEN IF HE WAS NOT INVOLVED DIRECTLY. IF THIS ATTITUDE PERSISTS IT WILL CERTAINLY CONTINUE TO MAKE MORE DIFFICULT THE POSSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERALIZATION.

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